

The structure of the debate on EU integration issues

A comparative analysis of party communication
in the EP 2014 elections

Beatrice Eugster

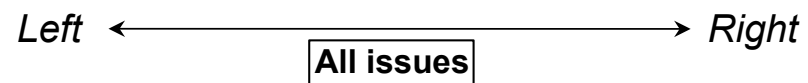
Research question

How is the debate on European integration issues structured?

Focus on:

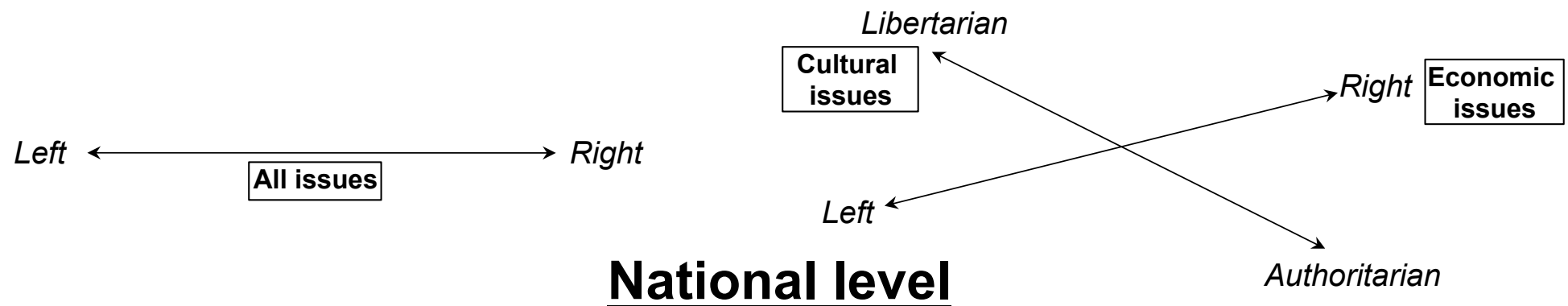
- > on the political conflicts at the EU level
 - > salient EU issues addressed by parties
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From national political conflicts to European political conflicts



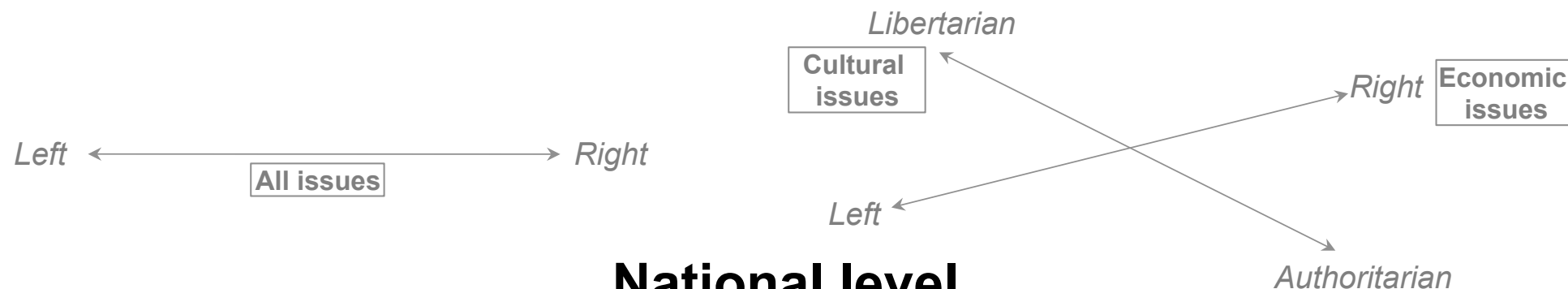
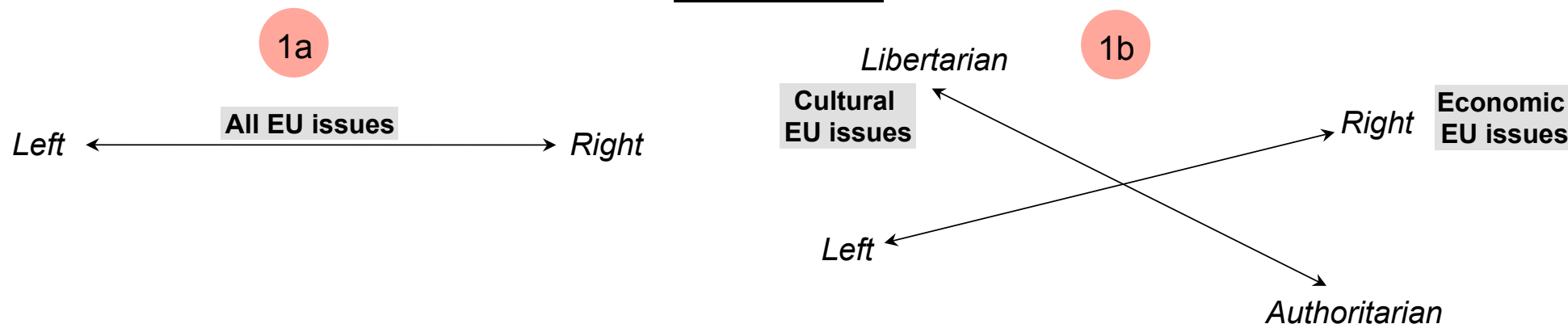
National level

From national political conflicts to European political conflicts



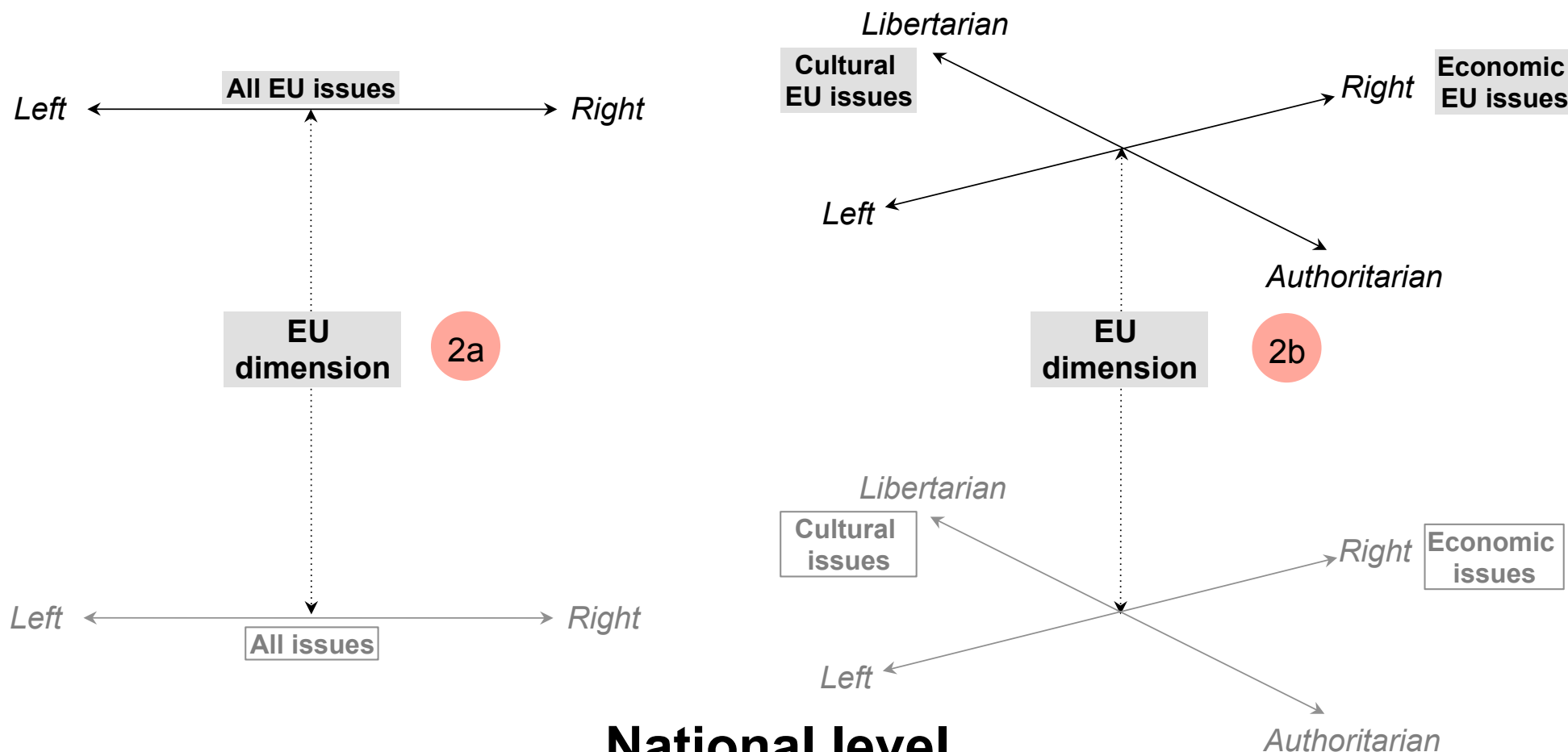
From national political conflicts to European political conflicts

EU level



From national political conflicts to European political conflicts

EU level



From national to European political cleavages (cont.)

(1) **Absorption of EU issues** along national political conflicts:

a) one single dimension:

- general left-right dimension (Tsebelis and Garrett' regulation model)
- left-libertarian/right-authoritarian dimension (Kitschelt 1994, Hooghe et al. 2002)

b) in two dimensions:

- economic and cultural dimension (Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008)

(2) **No absorption**, but emergence of a **EU-specific dimension**, in addition to the:

- a) left-right divide (Hix-Lord model, and Marks-Hooghe model)
- b) economic and cultural dimensions (Bakker et al. 2012)

Parties' positions on European integration: the *economic* and *political/ cultural* dimension

Dilemma of mainstream parties with regard to European integration

Social democrats: divided on economic/market integration

→ competition from radical left (economic demarcation)

Conservatives (and Christian democrats): divided on cultural integration

→ competition from radical right (cultural demarcation)

Liberals: divided on political dimension (opposition to further political integration)

Hypotheses – issues and positions parties follow in their political campaign

“Distraction from internal party division”

- > Parties on the *left* tend to focus stronger on and support *cultural/political integration*, while parties on the *right* put more emphasis on and support *economic integration*.

EU crisis as a chance to emphasize party division

- > Parties on the *left* tend to focus stronger on and support (regulative) *economic integration*, while parties on the *right* put more emphasis on and oppose *cultural/political integration*.

Peripheral/fringe parties

- > Peripheral parties on the *left* tend to focus stronger on and oppose *economic integration*, while fringe parties on the *right* put more emphasis on and oppose *cultural/political integration*.
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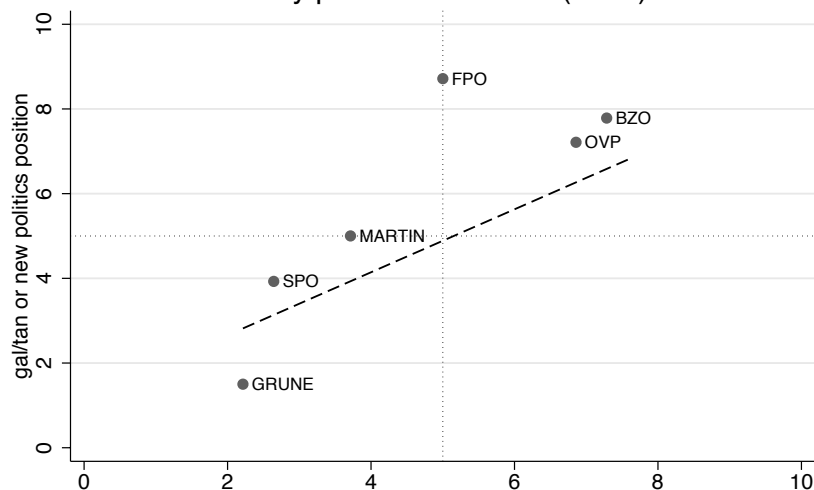
Methodological approach

- > Press releases referring to the European Union published 12 weeks before the 2014 EP elections in 7 countries
 - Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK) or a selection thereof – suggestions are very welcome.
 - > Indicator(s): combination of issues and positions communicated by political parties
 - > Comparison across countries
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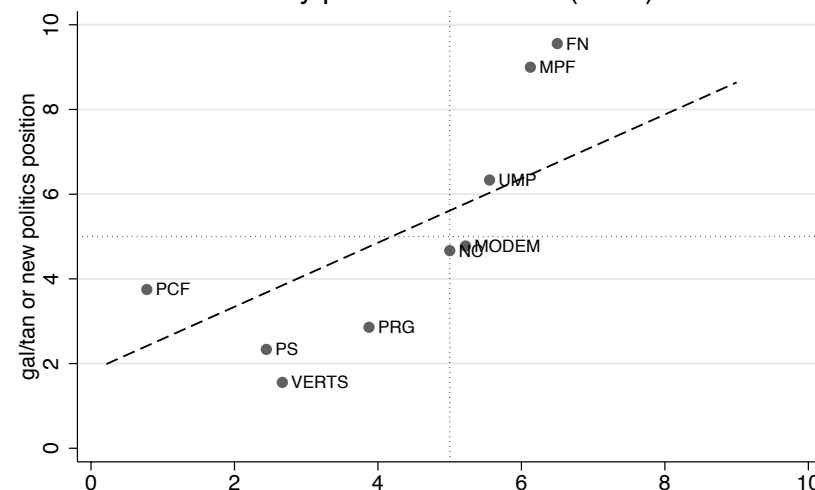


Party positions: Economic and cultural dimension

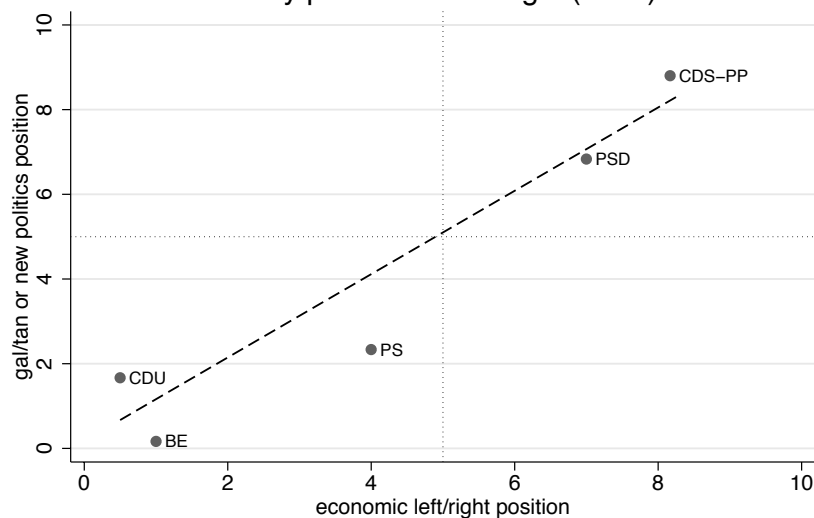
Party position in Austria (2010)



Party position in France (2010)

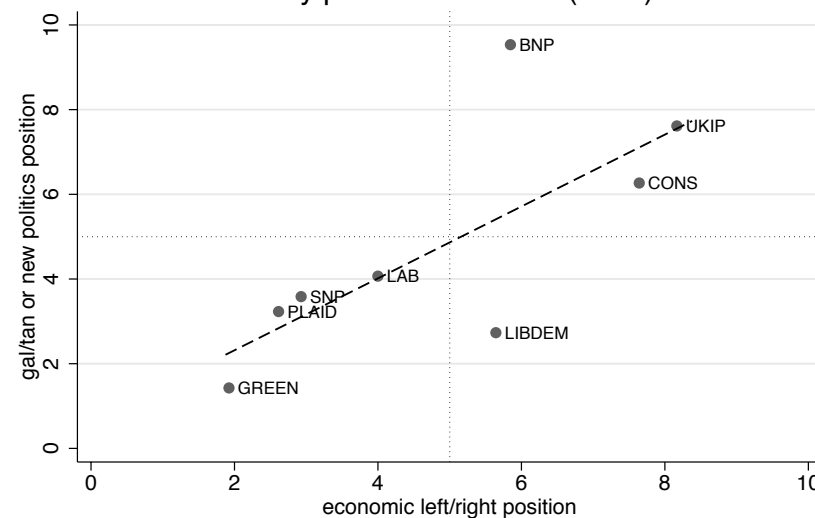


Party position in Portugal (2010)



Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

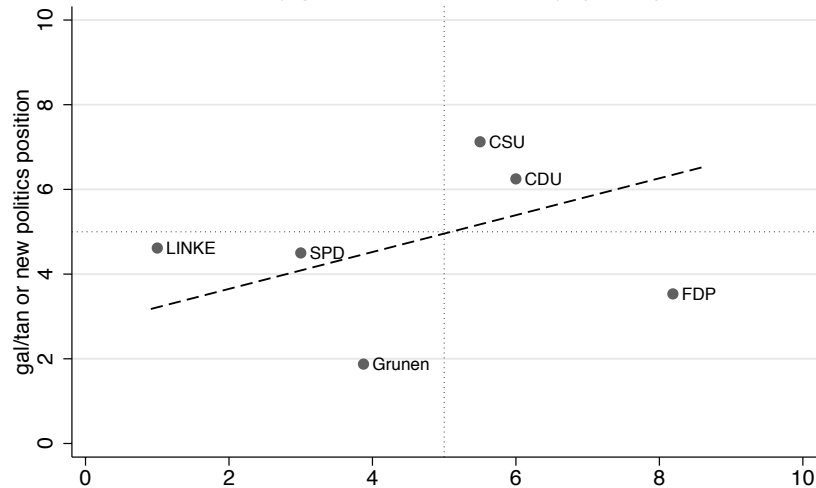
Party position in the UK (2010)



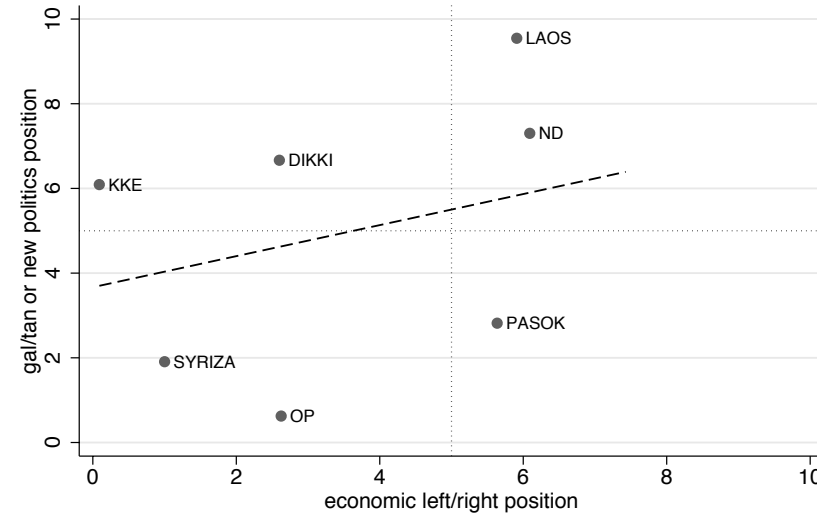
Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Party positions: Economic and cultural dimension

Party position in Germany (2010)

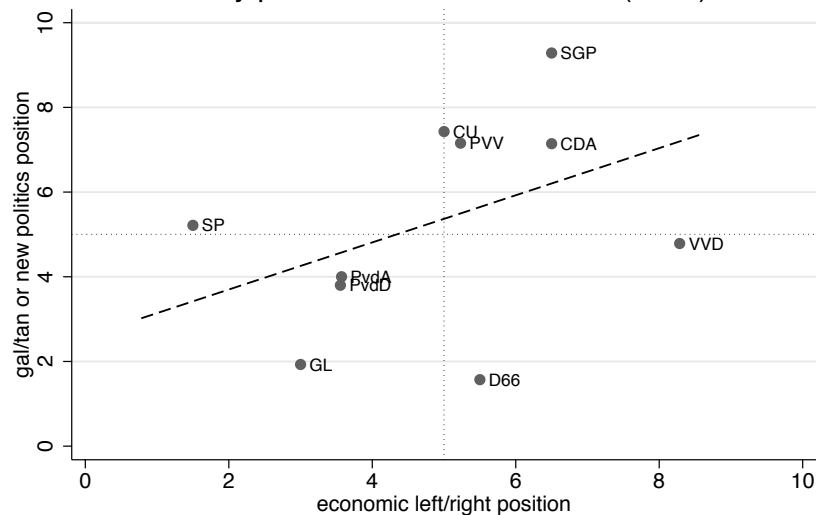


Party position in Greece (2010)



Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

Party position in the Netherlands (2010)



Source: Chapel Hill Expert Survey.

From national political conflicts to parties' position towards European integration

	Parties	Economic dimension (market integration)	Cultural/political dimension (integration)
<i>Mainstream parties</i>	Social democrats	<i>Internal division</i>	integration
	Christian democrats	integration	integration
	Conservatives	integration	demarcation
	Liberals	integration	<i>Internal division</i>
<i>Peripheral parties</i>	Radical left	demarcation	(moderate) integration
	Greens	(moderate) demarcation	(moderate) integration
	Radical right	demarcation	demarcation

Issue categorization - (2) «inductive» logic

Issue categorization (EU project)

- Economy
- Social and labor market policy
- Education and research
- Law and order
- Immigration
- International Affairs
- Culture and Other
- Environment and Energy
- Infrastructure
- Agriculture and Food
- Consumer protection
- Citizens' rights
- Constitutional questions and functioning of EU
- Territorial questions
- Administration and bureaucracy (corruption)
- Elections

(1) Empirical verification whether two dimensions – economic and cultural – can be found (based on issue position)

(2) «Alternative version»: combination of issue position (pro/contra) and the specific justification of the position

- *Economic*
 - *Cultural (ethnic, religious, political)*
 - *Other*
 - *(no justification)*
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